

On July 23rd, the United States Access Board published new design guidelines that cover access for people with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The guidelines update access requirements for a wide range of facilities in the public and private sectors covered by the law. The published rule also includes updated guidelines for Federal facilities covered by the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA). Both the ADA guidelines and the ABA guidelines, which the Board updated jointly to make them more consistent, address access in new construction and alterations and contain scoping provisions, which indicate what has to comply, and technical specifications, which spell out how compliance is to be achieved.

The new design document is the culmination of a comprehensive, decade-long review and update of the Board's ADA Accessibility Guidelines, which were first published in 1991. Revisions have been made so that the guidelines continue to meet the needs of people with disabilities and keep pace with technological innovations.

As part of this update, the Board has made its guidelines more consistent with model building codes, such as the International Building Code (IBC), and industry standards. It coordinated extensively with model code groups and standard-setting bodies throughout the process so that differences could be reconciled. As a result, improvements to the guidelines have been achieved, as well as to counterpart provisions in the IBC and key industry standards, including those for accessible facilities issued through the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

Copies of the new guidelines are available from the Board and are posted on its website at <http://www.access-board.gov/PO1.cfm>. To order a copy, call the Board's publications order line at (202) 272-0080 (Voice), (202) 272-0082 (TTY) or send an e-mail to pubs@access-board.gov and request publication S-50.